

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8864

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 2030

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652 XGDS-2

TAGS: PINR, PINS, PINT, LE

SUBJ: TALK WITH KAMAL JUMBLATT

1. SUMMARY: IN THE COURSE OF HOUR'S MEETING JUMBLATT CONFIRMED HIS NEGATIVISTIC ATTITUDE ON ALMOST EVERY POLICIAL ISSUE BEFORE HIM TODAY AND DEMONSTRATED, IN CASE WE HAD FORGOTTEN, HIS ABILITY TO SLIDE AROUND AN ARGUMENT RATHER THAN FOLLOW IT THROUGH RATIONALLY. MAIN POINT ON WHICH HE WAS RELATIVELY SINCERE, I THINK, WAS HIS BELIEF THAT HE IS HEADING A GENUINE REVOLT OF THE MASSES IN LEBANON WHICH MUST AND WILL INTIME PRODUCE WHAT HE TERMINED "GREATER DEMOCRACY" WHICH HE SEEMS TO VISUALIZE NO MORE ANTITHETICAL TO WESTERN CONCEPTS OF DEMOCRACY THAN THE SOCIAL REFORMING ROLE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTIES IN ITALY, FRANCE OR SPAIN, END SUMMARY.

2. JUMBLATT WAS OBVIOUSLY INTERESTED IN TALKING WITH ACTING DCM
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AND ME WHEN WE CALLED ON HIM AT 4:30 PM MARCH 3 TO THANK HIM FOR

HIS ROLE IN RELEASE OF USIS OFFICERS GALLAGHER AND DYKES.
HIS REMARKS ARE SUMMARIZED BELOW:

3. THE PRESIDENCY: JUMBLATT CALLED FOR FRANGIE'S EARLY RESIGNATION. WHILE GENERALLY DEPLORING DEARTH OF GOOD CANDIDATES TO REPLACE REANGIE, HE MENTIONED REYMOND EDDE AS PROBABLY THE BEST AND JEAN AZIZ AS A POSSIBILITY.

4. THE PRIME MINISTER: JUMBLATT SAID ANY LEBANESE GOVERNMENT REQUIRED AT LEAST THE TACIT SUPPORT OF HIS LEFT PROGRESSIVE FRONT TO FUNCTION. IT COULD NOT REALLY DEAL WITH BASIC ISSUES UNTIL YOUNGER MEN TOOK OVER AND THE PROGRESSIVE FRONT GOT THE PRIME MINISTERSHIP. HE SAID THERE WERE MANY YOUNG SUNNI LEADERS THAT COULD BE NAMED. WHEN PRESSED ON SPECIFICS, HE THREW OUT THE NAMES OF TABBARA B. AND Z. NSOULI.

5. REFORM: JUMBLATT TALKED AT LENGTH ABOUT NEED TO DECONFESSIONALIZE AND LAICIZE THE STATE. HE SPOKE OF ELECTION REFORM AND A NEW DEMOCRACY. FOR FIRST TIME IN HISTORY THE MASSES HAVE BEGUN TO RAISE THEIR CHOICE IN LEBANESE AFFAIRS. WHEN PRESSED, HE COMPARED SOCIAL REFORMING ROLE OF THE MASSES IN A DEMOCRACY TO BEHAVIOR OF COMMUNIST PARTIES IN ITALY, FRANCE AND SPAIN. (HE EASILY SIDE STEPPED OUR ARGUMENT THAT IT IS OTHER PARTIES WHICH MAINTAIN THE DEMOCRATIC FRAMEWORK IN THOSE COUNTRIES WITHIN WHICH COMMUNIST PARTIES OPERATE.) HE REITERATED HIS CALL FOR A REASSEMBLING OF DIALOGUE COMMITTEE AND IMPLIED THAT WAS THE PLACE FOR FIGHTING LEADERS ON BOTH SIDES TO DISCUSS THINGS RATHER THAN THEMSELVES BEING IN ANY NEW GOVERNMENT. (COMMENT: ONE OF HIS BETTER IDEAS).

6. JUMBLATT'S CURRENT FRICTION WITH SYRIA WAS REFLECTED IN FEARS HE EXPRESSED ON THE DIAPPEARANCE OF DEMOCRACY, WHICH HE CALLED LEGANON'S MOST PRECIOUS ASSET. HE REFERRED IRONICALLY TO THE "U.S.-SYRIAN AGREEMENT" WHICH PERMITTED SYRIA TO OPERATE IN LEBANON.

7. LEBANON ARMY: JUMBLATT SEVERAL TIMES SPOKE ABOUT THE ARMY. HE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE TO PUT IT TOGETHER ALONG LINES CURRENTLY BEING PURSUED BY GOVERNMENT BECAUSE IT IS TOO SPLIT. HE MADE CERTAIN CONTRADICTORY STATEMENTS INDICATING CONFUSED
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THINKING ON THE QUESTION AND ENDED UP PROPOSING THAT A NEW ARMY BE ORGANIZED AND BE SENT TO ISRAELI BORDER WHERE IT COULD ENGAGE IN RAIDS AND OTHER ACTIVITIES AGAINST ISRAEL TO GIVE ITS MEMBERS A SENSE OF SOLIDARITY AGAINST A COMMON ENEMY.

8. CIVIL WAR: JUMBLATT EXPRESSED SKEPTICISM THAT CASUALTIES FROM THE CIVIL WAR WERE NOT AS GREAT AS MANY SAID. HE QUOTED "ARMY FIGURE" OF ABOUT 6,000 KILLED AND SUGGESTED

MAJORITY PROBABLY WERE NON-COMBATANTS, MOST OF THEM KILLED AFTER BEING KIDNAPPED. HE ACCUSED PHALANGE AND OTHER RIGHTISTS OF FOSTERING BLOOD LUST AMONG YOUNG RECRUITS (THEY WERE TORTURING ANIMALS AND BATHING THEIR YOUNG MEN IN TUBS OF ANIMAL BLOOD). HE WONDERED HOW ALL THESE YOUNG FIGHTERS ON ALL SIDES COULD GO BACK TO MORE PEACEFUL LIVES AND DID NOT SEEM TO BELIEVE IN INTERGRATION INTO THE ARMY MORE THAN A PARTIAL SOLUTION. HE ADVANCED THE THESIS THAT CIVIL WAR MIGHT CONTINUE, PETERING OUT GRADUALLY FROM, SAY 6,000 TO 1,000 TO 200 TO 50 TO 10 ETC) KILLED MUCH AS RIPPLES IN A SEA WAVE. WHILE NOT TAKING DIRECT ISSUE WITH MY COMMENT THAT 10 MONTHS OF WAR SHOULD HAVE DEMONSTRATED TO ALL SIDES THAT THEIR CAUSE COULD NOT WIN THROUGH MILITARY VICTORY, HE EXPRESSED THE OPINION THAT SUCH BLOOD LETTING SOMETIMES HAS VIRTUE OF EXTERIORIZING INTERNAL COMPLEXES IN PEOPLE SO THAT THEY FEEL BETTER AFTERWARDS. LARDING THE PRAGMATIC WITH THE MYSTICAL, JUMBLATT WENT ON AT LENGTH TO EXPLAIN THE IMPORTANCE OF "MYTH" FOR PEOPLES OF THE ORIENT (AND EVEN FOR SUCH WESTERN PEOPLE AS THE GERMANS UNDER THE NAZIS) AND THE CLOSED NATURE OF COMMUNITIES IN THE LEBANON. MORAL HE DREW WAS THAT WESTERN MATERIALISM AND PRAGMATISM WERE NOT PARTICULARLY APPLICABLE TO THE EAST.

9. THE U.S. AND ISRAEL: JUMBLATT TERMED ISRAEL A RELIGIOUS AND RACIST STATE. HE DEPLORED U.S. POLICY AS TOTALLY PRAGMATIC (PARTICULARLY SECRETARY KISSINGER) WHOM HE SAID HE DID NOT TRUST), AND

DEVOID OF THE IDEALISM OF THE EISENHOWER YEARS. HE SUGGESTED SOLUTION OF THE REGIONAL PROBLEM WOULD BE THROUGH APPLICATION OF THE 1947 UN RESOLUTION ON PARTITION OF PALESTINE. (COMMENT: JUMBLATT WAS UNSURE OF HIS DATES AND FACTS AT SEVERAL POINTS IN DISCUSSING ARAB-ISRAELI RELATIONS AND DEMONSTRATED THE SECONDARY NATURE OF THAT PROBLEM IN HIS MIND WHEN HE INSISTED THAT LEBANESE SITUATION WAS COMPLETELY SEPARABLE FROM IT AND COULD

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BE SOLVED SEPARATELY).

10. COMMENT: JUMBLATT WAS FRIENDLY AND RELATIVELY MILD MANNERED THROUGHOUT. HE RESPONDED POSITIVELY TO SUGGESTIONS THAT AMBASSADOR GODLEY AND I LOOKED FORWARD TO FUTURE CONTACT WITH HIM. THERE IS NO DOUBT, NEVERTHELESS, THAT HE IS AN EXCEEDINGLY DANGEROUS POLITICAL LEADER WHO IS NOT PREPARED TO MAKE CONCESSIONS IN THE NAME OF LEBANESE UNITY OR PATRIOTISM. HIS MESSAGE TO US WAS PRETTY NEGATIVE FROM START TO FINISH. HIS DRIVING FORCE WOULD APPEAR TO BE A BELIEF THAT HE CAN MASTER HISTORICAL REVOLUTIONARY FORCES WHICH ARE GOING TO TRANSFORM LEBANON SOCIALLY WITHOUT DESTROYING ITS ESSENTIAL DEMOCRACY, BUT ACTUALLY IMPROVING IT. DESPITE HIS RELATIVE BRILLIANCE IN THE LEBANESE SCENE AND IDEALISTIC PATTERN, I SUSPECT CYNICS WILL PROBABLY RECOGNIZE HIM AS A PRIME EXAMPLE OF THEIR OWN SPECIES.

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